

01 Straight Arms



Summary

In this lesson, dancers are introduced to straight port de bras and body shapes. In warm-up, they explore a Dancer's Posture, parallel position, port de bras, and a stretch routine. Across the floor, they explore movements using straight lines. In the combination, they begin their straight shapes movement phrase, which includes a circular pathway and the use of levels.

- **HS Proficient DA:Pr5.1.I.a.** Embody technical dance skills (for example, functional alignment, coordination, balance, core support, clarity of movement, weight shifts, flexibility/range of motion) to retain and execute dance choreography.
- **HS Proficient DA:Re.7.1.I.a.** Analyze recurring patterns of movement and their relationships in dance in context of artistic intent.

Time

40 minutes

Essential Question

In which ways do dancers create straight lines in their movement?

Agenda

- 1) Warm-up
- 2) Across the Floor
- 3) Combination

Objectives

Content Objective

Students will **explore** straight lines and body shapes in warm-up, across the floor progressions, and a combination.

Language Objective

Orally or in writing, students will **identify** and **describe** ways in which dancers create straight lines and body shapes.

Content Vocabulary

Dancer's Posture
Isolation
Roll Down
Port de Bras
Stretch
Plié
Straight Arms
Upstage/Downstage
Circular Pathway
Body Shape
Levels

Sentence Stems

"Dancers create straight lines in their movement by ..."

"I notice straight lines in the ..."

"This ... shape has straight lines, because ..."

"Two shapes that have straight lines are ____ and ____"

Lesson Overview

Warm-up

- 1) Dancer's Posture
- 2) Isolation
- 3) Roll Down (and Up) the Spine
- 4) Port de Bras (Straight Arms)
- 5) Stretch Sequence #1 (Parallel Feet)

Across the Floor

- 1) Walking with Straight Port de Bras
- 2) Airplane Arms (Upstage Only)

Combination

- 1) Straight Shapes

Background Information

From the tallest architecture to animated movies, our world is defined by lines. They control one's eye by indicating edge and movement. A dancer's body explores all different lines in all different planes. They may vary in direction (vertical, horizontal, diagonal), shape (straight, curved, spiral, angular), size (long, short), and quality (soft, hard). While there is no 'bad' line, there is 'good' intention. As artists, dancers strive to draw body-lines that are purposeful and full of energy.

Assessment

The application of academic language in dance is very important. Students should learn to think and speak the language of dance, as well as perform its physical expression. Consider applying oral Think/Pair/Share or written strategies in allowing students to reflect on their work and connect to the academic language. Not all questions need to be answered and you may embed them throughout the lesson as you see fit.

Furthermore, evaluate your needs to collect data resources of student work. We would encourage you to be transparent with students about their data, by sharing it with them and/or encourage them to actively monitor and work towards their personal growth in dance.

Optional Oral and/or Written Prompts for this Lesson

1. In which ways do dancers create straight lines in their movement?
2. Identify two shapes from today's lesson that have straight lines.
3. Identify one shape from today's lesson that does not have straight lines.
4. Why are lines and body shapes important to dance?
5. Define [insert vocabulary word].

Warm-up

01 Dancer's Posture

Vocabulary

Dancer's Posture – the way in which a dancer holds their body

- Lifted through legs
- Neutral pelvis
- Abdominals engaged
- Lifted chest
- Shoulders down
- Tall neck
- Chin in

(The term *alignment* will be used later in curriculum.)

Exercise

- From starting position, guide students to hold a *Dancer's Posture*. Work from the ground up to the head.
- Once established, have students breathe full breaths for 30 seconds: in through the nose and out through the mouth.

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Natural Low

Check for Understanding

- Lifted through legs
- Neutral pelvis
- Abdominals engaged
- Lifted chest
- Shoulders down
- Tall neck
- Chin in

Music

None

02 Isolation

Vocabulary

Isolation – Moving one body part at a time

(Most commonly, dancers isolate head, shoulders, ribcage, arms, hands, hips, and feet.)

Exercise

1. Have students follow along as you lead the exercise.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Head		
Up	1	
Down	2	
Up	3	
Down	4	
Up	5	
Down	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat a movement more than once • Add a 'center' position between each direction to decrease the speed of transition. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up ○ Center ○ Down ○ Center ○ Up ○ Center ○ Down ○ Center
Up	7	
Down	8	
Left	1	
Right	2	
Left	3	
Right	4	
Left	5	
Right	6	
Left	7	
Right	8	
Ear to Shoulder Left	1	
Ear to Shoulder Right	2	
Ear to Shoulder Left	3	
Ear to Shoulder Right	4	
Ear to Shoulder Left	5	
Ear to Shoulder Right	6	
Ear to Shoulder Left	7	
Ear to Shoulder Right	8	

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Natural Low

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer's Posture*
- Move only one body part
- Do not shift weight side to side

Music

80-120 BPM



02 Isolation

Exercise (cont.)

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Head		
Circle down and left	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Half circles are good when dancers do not hold a tall, lifted neck
Circle down and right	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	

Shoulders		
Up	1	
Down	2	
Up	3	
Down	4	
Up	5	
Down	6	
Up	7	
Down	8	
Front	1	
Back	2	
Front	3	
Back	4	
Front	5	
Back	6	
Front	7	
Back	8	

02 Isolation

Exercise (cont.)

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Shoulders		
Front	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Advanced Dancers, try moving shoulders in opposite directions
Up	2	
Back	3	
Down	4	
Front	5	
Up	6	
Back	7	
Down	8	
Back	1	
Up	2	
Front	3	
Down	4	
Back	5	
Up	6	
Front	7	
Down	8	
Smooth Circle Front	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
Smooth Circle Front	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
Smooth Circle Back	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
Smooth Circle Back	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	



02 Isolation

Exercise (cont.)

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Chest (hands on pelvis)		
Left	1	
Right	2	
Left	3	
Right	4	
Left	5	
Right	6	
Left	7	
Right	8	
Front	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat a direction more than once • Add a 'center' position between each direction to decrease the speed of transition. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Front ○ Center ○ Back ○ Center ○ Front ○ Center ○ Back ○ Center
Back	2	
Front	3	
Back	4	
Front	5	
Back	6	
Front	7	
Back	8	
Front	1	
Left	2	
Back	3	
Right	4	
Front	5	
Left	6	
Back	7	
Right	8	
Front	1	
Right	2	
Back	3	
Left	4	
Front	5	
Right	6	
Back	7	
Left	8	

02 Isolation

Exercise (cont.)

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Chest (hands on pelvis)		
Smooth Circle Left	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
Smooth Circle Left	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
Smooth Circle Right	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
Smooth Circle Right	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	

Hips (Arms in Parallel 2 nd ; Feet Parallel Wide 2 nd ; Slight plié)	1	
Left	2	
Right	3	
Left	4	
Right	5	
Left	6	
Right	7	
Left	8	
Right	1	
Front	2	
Back	3	
Front	4	
Back	5	
Front	6	
Back	7	
Front	8	
Back		

- If students become embarrassed, instead try having them look at the ceiling, practice a 'hula-hoop,' and/or don't repeat directions

02 Isolation

Exercise (cont.)

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Hips (Arms in Parallel 2 nd ; Feet Parallel Wide 2 nd ; Slight plié)	1	
Front	2	
Left	3	
Back	4	
Right	5	
Front	6	
Left	7	
Back	8	
Right	1	
Front	2	
Right	3	
Back	4	
Left	5	
Front	6	
Right	7	
Back	8	
Left	1	
Smooth Circle Left	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
Smooth Circle Left	6	
	7	
	8	
	1	
Smooth Circle Right	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
Smooth Circle Right	6	
	7	
	8	

03 Roll Down (and Up) the Spine

Vocabulary

Roll Down – A forward release of the spine, one vertebrae at a time

(More specifically, we are flexing the spine as we go forward.)

Exercise

1. Introduce the exercise and complete 2-4 times.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Roll Down (tuck chin)	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
Roll Up (pull tailbone down)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge that it's okay if a dancer is not flexible and that it will come in time • Offer a slight bend in the knees • Shake the body to help 'loosen' up • If students arrive early in the roll down/up, ask them to take a breath
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	
Repeat 2-4x		

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Natural Low

Check for Understanding

- Begin and end with a *Dancer's Posture*
- Tuck the chin in to go down
- Move one vertebrae at a time
- Lift through the abdomen while rolling down and up
- Let head hang at bottom
- Pull tailbone down to stack vertebrae up
- When rolling up, head is last body part to lift up
- Take the full counts to go down and up

Music

115-150 BPM

04 Port de Bras (Straight Arms)

Vocabulary

Port de Bras – A dancer’s arm shape and movement

(It sometimes includes the positions of the head, shoulders and ribcage.)

Exercise

1. Walk students through the arm positions and palm facings. Repeat walk through as necessary.
2. Complete full sequence 4-8 times with full timing.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Middle (palms down)	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold each position for 2 or 4 counts • Separate the sequence into different series. For example, practice counts 1-4 repeatedly. Then practice 5-8. Then combine the two.
2 nd (palms out)	2	
Middle (palms in)	3	
Low (palms in)	4	
Middle (palms in)	5	
High (palms in)	6	
2 nd (palms out)	7	
Low (palms in)	8	
Repeat 4-8x		

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Low Parallel

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer’s Posture*
- Maintain straight arms
- Palms change orientation
- Move with percussive energy
- As arms lift, pull down shoulder blades and keep neck tall

Music

75-130 BPM

05 Stretch Sequence #1 (Parallel)

Vocabulary

Stretch – A form of movement to increase flexibility

There are many health benefits, such as:

- Decreasing injury
- Increasing energy
- Releasing tension, becoming more relaxed
- Sleeping better
- Reducing stress
- Having better posture

Exercise

1. Have students follow along as you lead the exercise.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Torso Isolation	1	
Lateral Stretch	2 - 8	
Lift torso	1	
Flat Back (to corner)	2 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop to teach correct posturing
Lift torso	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold positions for longer
Release back and hanging over leg	2 - 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students exit each position with breath in and out
Move to center	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer mindset that stretching is intentional and active
Hang in center	2 - 8	
Demi-plié	1	
Roll up	2 - 8	

Starting Foot Position

Wide 2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

2nd Parallel

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer's Posture*
- Ground legs and pelvis
- Maintain hips square to front
- Stretch whole spine and head
- On Lateral stretch, maintain chest and head square to front
- On Flat Back, have a long spine from tailbone to head (tailbone lifts and heart 'opens')
- On Flat Back, eyes focus toward floor and slightly forward
- Hang head when over leg and in center
- Pull tailbone down to roll up
- Lift through core and ribcage to roll up

Music

75-160 BPM



Across the Floor

01 Walking with Straight Port de Bras

Vocabulary

Port de Bras – A dancer's arm shape and movement

Progression

1. Step on each count and change port de bras position. Port de bras should remain straight.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
2 nd (palms up)	1	
High (palms in)	2	
2 nd (palms down)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow tempo • Just walk to practice the timing • Just practice port de bras • Practice the movement with everyone at the same time
Low (palms in)	4	
2 nd (palms up)	5	
High (palms in)	6	
2 nd (palms down)	7	
Low (palms in)	8	

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Low Parallel

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer's Posture*
- Eyes focus forward
- Begin walking with the upstage leg
- Keep time with the music
- Maintain straight arms
- Move with percussive energy

Music

80-160 bpm

02 Airplane Arms (Upstage Only)

Vocabulary

Port de Bras – A dancer’s arm shape and movement

Circular Pathway – Moving in a circular path

Upstage – Away from the audience

Plié – A bending of the knees

(Plié is introduced in Lesson 03.)

Progression

1. Introduce the Airplane Arms progression and technical pointers.
 - a. For counts 1-3, students walk upright with arms at their side.
 - b. On count 4, they bend their knees and bring arms to chest.
 - c. For counts 5-8, they walk in circular pathway upstage with airplane arms. Their gaze is down.

Sequence	Count	Differentiation
Walk	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take out the plié • Slow tempo • Practice the movement with everyone at the same time • Instead of saying ‘upstage’, try referring to an object, poster, or wall • Practicing pushing into each step to maintain a circular pathway; especially when up-tempo
Walk	2	
Walk	3	
Walk + Plié or ‘Bend the knees’	4	
Airplane Upstage in circular pathway	5	
	6	
	7	
	8	

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Low Parallel

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer’s Posture*
- Maintain straight arms
- Plié on 4 with arms bent at middle level
- Upstage hand is down during Airplane
- Eyes focus down toward upstage hand during Airplane
- Maintain a larger circular pathway, not just turn in place
- Push into each step

Music

75-130 BPM



Combination

01 Straight Shapes Combination

Vocabulary

Body Shape – An element of Space, it is the form of one's body

Levels – An element of Space, it is the height of the dancer in relation to the floor; typically, high, middle and low levels

Combination

1. Introduce Levels.
2. Practice making straight arms/body shapes at different levels. Students change shapes every 4 counts.
3. Put together the combination:

Combination	Count
Low level with straight arms/body shapes	1 - 4
High level with straight arms/body shapes	5 - 8
Middle Level with straight arms/body shapes	1 - 4
Random level with straight arms/body shapes	5 - 8

Extensions

- Have students work with a partner to create identical shapes
- Have half the group perform their shapes and then the other half
- Increase the speed in which students change shapes
- Have students close their eyes to perform their choreography

Starting Foot Position

2nd Parallel

Starting Port de Bras

Low Parallel

Check for Understanding

- Maintain a *Dancer's Posture*
- Arm/body shapes indicate straight lines
- Change shapes/levels within 1 count
- Fully enter the level changes
- Move with energy

Music

80-160 bpm